

## Mass Effect 3: A Fitting Finale for the Franchise

Building from the strong foundation provided by its critically acclaimed predecessors, the third and final act of this Sci-Fi trilogy delivers on all fronts. Bioware, the preeminent name in role playing games, delivers yet another stellar effort. The formula is simple, but not easily executed. Their success hinges upon outstanding writing, from start to finish, and includes amazing attention to detail both character and narrative development. This, combined with a robust role playing system makes for a highly customized experience, with six possible endings. Along the journey the player the choice of exploring countless side stories, each of which helps to further develop the characters and the narrative. And not only do all of the characters have strong back stories, their back stories have back stories, with nuanced and interesting characters appearing at every turn. There is a near limitless depth to the Mass Effect universe, all of it interesting and well detailed, with none of it feeling like an afterthought or add-on. There is even a free app, "Mass Effect 3 Datapad," that allows you access to an encyclopedia of information about the Mass Effect universe. If I had to choose one word to describe Mass Effect, it would be *complete*.

I give Bioware a lot of credit for thinking outside of the box in their final iteration. For example, when it comes to choosing your game experience, two new modes of play: action mode and story mode, add to the traditional rpg mode, allowing three distinct experiences for the player. For me the rpg mode will always win out, as I find it to be the most in-depth game experience, but for others looking to simply enjoy the story or to focus on visceral action, the options are there. The other major addition is the inclusion of a cooperative multiplayer mode, which allows you to team with up to three other players to repel waves of attackers. This is significant addition, and allows the gameplay experience to be extended once the main story has been completed. Like the single player game, you can 'level up' your character and improve your weapons abilities. Bioware stepped up their game and delivered on all fronts, and I commend them for their commend their epic conclusion to this blockbuster trilogy. I don't think the story has been finally told however. There will almost certainly be a movie deal in the making, and well there should be, as this universe is simply too compelling to be left dormant.

Dr. Anthony Betrus  
The Game Connoisseur